

1/1/72

Dear Paul,

In writing you in haste yesterday I gave too unstinting approval to your approach to your own work on AO than I should have. Not that there is anything wrong with what you projected, but with the order of priorities and what you might expect from what you said.

As I remember it, from this letter and earlier ones, you plan to put together everything you have when you finish your thesis. I believe that is correct. If you said you plan to write everything you have, that is even better, in part because of what I did not say, which is that much as we might hope for it, we ought not expect any major evidentiary breakthrough.

If you can take the time, the best possible approach is to have the most complete mastery of and control over the information you have to begin with. First assembling and understanding it and then organizing it not only for writing but into writing is the best way of doing this. There is so much I forget I have come to the certainty that younger minds must have some of the same problem.

After you have done this, for whatever my opinion is worth, you should come here and go through all my files that you might think relevant. I don't think you should take my evaluation of what I have at face value. I think you should assume that as you are willing to disagree with my interpretations, you should also at least hope to see what I have not. Both can, whether or not they will, give you insights from what I have that I may now have given you and may not have gotten for myself. It is not that I think I am wrong or that I have missed anything but I think both are possible and I think, more importantly, that you should have a different approach, as I think you do. Especially with the passing of time do I think your book can be more important as I long ago suggested to you, as a study of the FBI. Today that is one of the few assassination stories that can achieve commercial acceptability. And with your tendency to understate and underevaluate, the commercial prospects are brightened. Although I can see no commercial possibilities for my own work today and none for bringing it out privately, it may seem strange to you, but it would still be the fact that were you to do it this way and were mine to be out before then and have attracted a little attention, your own literary success has much greater chance. This is the odd way publishing is. We can discuss this in person some time if it means anything to you.

After you have the knowledge of my stuff, then go out on your own. I think you should also take the time to listen to and perhaps dub some tapes. If both of my cassette machines are then working (and now only one is, half-way - it doesn't go into the record mode - the other being at the factory for repair) you will not need to bring your own machine. I also have an operating reel-to-reel machine, which you'll need because some of my earlier interviews are on open reels. You will not want to listen to all my stuff, for it would take too long. I think after you have your own knowledge fixed in your mind and a good idea of what is in my files, you should then ask me all the questions you can think of about my personal investigations. Not until after this should you do any interviewing of your own. And while I have no objection to your interviewing everyone I have, I think you might better spend the time finding and interviewing those I have not. You mentioned interviewing Core and Kaack. No objection at all. Perhaps both will take the time. I think Jesse will if I ask him to. I don't think Kaack dare give you more than he has me, but I think you should make the effort because he is so important, likewise Deb, who I've never had the time to seek out. I still plan it. While there is a large amount of duplication that can't be avoided, I think it better than with a different approach and emphasis you also seek other sources and information. We should both think of what this can and should mean. I remember clearly your apprehensions before you interviewed Johann Rush - please needle him for me again - he wrote that he'd write and then he didn't when I asked you to. I think by the time you finished that one you realized that there is no trick to it and you can do it. But important in this is how you present yourself and your objectives and what you seek. You will need the confidence of those you interview.

I thought of writing you while I was making the coffee this a.m. and this is off the top of the head. So let me digress for aush. You know what we have covered in the past. There is now a new angle. Tell him we have learned some of what was edited out and that it did exist, after the outtakes, at the time of the assassination, and tell him that both Jesse Core and Ed Planer saw it then, in the existing WDSU footage, and both told me the same thing. Jesse Core was still in it then and is not now. But Jesse's chief interest was in getting the thing cleaned up and away, not on TV, and one of his stronger recollections is the flight of the third man when he cursed and shouted. When I asked Ed Planer if he remembered viewing the film with Jesse and seeing Jesse in it his response was yes. I said are you certain Jesse was in it? "Absolutely!". So, I presume that footage showed some of what the spooks want hidden, and I compare this with Jesse's recollections, and one possibility seems obvious. Ask him what sequences he remembers and what and who was in them, what he remembers being edited out immediately, and what he remembers of what stills he made. Only two of his 17 remain in the files now. And how many dups did he make? My recollection is that the maximum number of different pictures any one agent or pair of agents showed is six.

Another digression, but something you can do other than I did is to interview Jeanne Mack, who is now married and when last I heard was out there. Perhaps Hal or Turner know the new name and address. There is much on Thornley we don't know, and one is what he may have said of LHO. They broke up before LHO attracted any local attention. If the prospects are not particularly bright, they ought not be ignored. There is reason to believe Ed did have something to do with LHO in MO, but the evidence is far from overwhelming and may be deceptive. You should figure on interviewing her twice, the second time after I know what you got the first.

This reminds me of tape recorders. If you do not have a convenient, meaning both very portable and dependable, I recommend that of what is today available, you consider the Sony PC40, a small, tough cassette machine with many advantages. Vasts about \$100 today. The copies are not nearly as good, the smaller machines and the cheaper ones ditto. If I have had a trouble develop with mine, that can happen with any. It is a fine machine. You should also have a decent camera, and if you do not have one, recommend 35mm. If you buy one and are any good at it you'll need no recommendations. Many are suitable. But one of the problems of travelling and interviewing is bulk. You might want to look into a good and very small Swiss camera, little known, Tessina. About the size of a pack of cigarettes but takes 35 film. Disadvantages: can't use special lenses, like closeup (which I never do) and telephoto.

The advantages of interviewing the same people I have include getting your own feel of them and asking them what I have not and giving them a chance to recall what they didn't until after I interviewed them. The disadvantages are that your time and money are not unlimited and you might better spend both seeking what I didn't find or didn't have time to, etc. There are F.O. areas I have not yet had time to plumb. Same, more so, for Dallas.

In a very few cases, I have to keep things confidential. Where this is asked I do it. But you should know that I believe what I have learned about Audkins' source on the rumor attributed to him. It was not Swatt. And I think one of the tougher areas and one in which I now plan only what you know of, Ruby, is one you might want to consider. But I think the most important angle is as a CI. One of the conspicuous gaps in the existing FBI reports is that while it admits they tried to develop him as an informant or CI it ignored SOP, which is a provisional period as a PCI. It was twice as long or 3 times as for SI, which was, I think, 6 months. I have this in my notes. Another aspect that should be explored is techniques, especially of diversions. You might want to consider the Caudet-Borenstein thing one such, but essentially how the truth was avoided and then what the truth is. Inferences of CIA connection is another, inherent here, too. Many, many different ways and approaches. I think you should think this all through carefully. But I believe whatever course you take, you should begin it as I suggest above, which I think is what you also said. Best,